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ABSTRACT

Intended for teacher educators, the document provides four presentations on the methods and effectiveness of the Braille Speed Reading Institute. A general background of the Institute by A. Ensign traces the development of the project from a request made by a teacher of the blind and partially sighted to the completion and finalization of details prior to the Institute's opening. Listed in the evaluation of procedures by V. McBride are 11 instructional steps (such as begin each practice session with warm-up exercises) given to the 12 blind and five sighted students involved in the 10-day program. Covered in the section on evaluation of the Institute titled "An Exploration of the Effectiveness of Braille Speed Reading Techniques" (by M. Hodson, et al.) are an introduction, purpose of the study, description of the Institute, methodology, and findings. In a general assessment of the Institute (by M. Polzien and A. Ensign), it is noted that the Institute appeared to have made an impact upon the 17 Ss by motivating thought, communication, and experimentation. Attachments include a preliminary description of the workshop, preliminary information for participants, and sample evaluation forms. (SB)

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AN EXPLORATION IN BRAILLE SPEED READING

Report and Evaluation
of the 1973
McBride Institute
in Michigan

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PREFACE

This document presents the approach to the fourth Braille Speed Reading Institute given by Dr. Vearl G. McBride, which took place in Michigan during July 2 - 13, 1973. It differs from his three preceeding presentations made in other states, in that this Institute was structured with a built-in research design which would provide concrete scores in gained rates of reading and accompanying rates of comprehension.

All arrangements were made in advance on a cooperative and agreeable basis with the instructor, participants and research team, so that no elements of surprise or dissent prevailed in the planning. It was an amicable exploration and experiment which provided both ambivalent and pleasant experiences on the part of those who engaged in the study.

It is felt that the study was timely and necessary. The data is here presented in as factual a manner as possible by Dr. McBride, the participants of the Institute, and the Michigan State University research team. The reader of this report is therefore at liberty to draw his own conclusions.

Margaret S. Polzien

Co-director

C O N T E N T S

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PARTICIPANTS

Grateful appreciation is extended to the participants and practice students who attended the Institute. Without their cooperation this study would not have been possible.

Penny Atkins
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PLANNING COMMITTEE

The planning committee involved visually impaired and sighted personnel. They were:

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We are most indebted to Dr. Edwin Keller, Professor, Department of Elementary and Special Education, Michigan State University, who guided the Research Team from the planning stages through the functioning sessions; during, following and in the final deliberations and writing of the Institute Evaluation. His critical appraisals lent much to the complete study.

Acknowledgement of university personnel is given on page i of the "Evaluation of the Institute". Assisting in testing were Diane Hodson, Maggie Rolfes, Harold Weiner, Will Johnson and Velma Allen. Other volunteers were Diane Drescher, Kathy Brede, Celeste Buxton, Peggy Carter, Lyn Dawson and Connie Caldwell.

Particular mention should be made of Carol Nogy who gave her expertise of the media to video-taping the entire instructional presentation of the Institute.

I

BACKGROUND OF THE INSTITUTE

An Institute on Braille Speed Reading for the Blind was held in July, 1973 in Lansing, Michigan. This Institute was federally funded under P.L.91.230 Part D.

Request for such an Institute was first made by a teacher of the blind and partially seeing who contacted the state consultant for the visually impaired and indicated her interest in such an inservice experience. Accustomed to the laborious progress and sometimes serious problems encountered in the teaching of braille to visually impaired children, this teacher spoke with enthusiasm about what appeared to be an exciting development in this field. She made reference to a legally blind professional person, known to both, saying that he had participated in a workshop in Utah with Dr. Vearl McBride. His experiences in that workshop had been of a positive nature, and this teacher asked whether or not Dr. McBride might be brought to Michigan so that Michigan teachers could be exposed to what appeared to be an innovative and promising process.

The state consultant pursued the lead. She called Dr. McBride and asked if he would be interested in presenting a workshop in Michigan, requesting that he send a brief description of activities to be used in the preparation of the proposal for funding. Dr. McBride complied, including in his commentary (see "Workshop in Rapid Braille" page A 1) the comment:

> "It is expected that those participating in the program will increase their rate of reading by an average increase of 300 to 800 percent, with as good or better comprehension than that with which they now read. It must be added that this will be so if they will follow the instructions given."

Having satisfied herself on the practical feasibility of offering the workshop, the state consultant discussed with colleagues the propriety of sponsoring it through the State Department. She sought counsel from key people known

to her, based at the American Foundation for the Blind, the Bureau of Education for the Handicapped of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, and elsewhere. It was, therefore, only after careful consideration that she proceeded with planning. Apparently certain salient criteria for requesting funding for this Institute were met, namely:

1. A significant educational task was to be addressed.
2. New techniques were to be explored, albeit controversial.
3. Interest and curiosity were evidenced in regard to braille speed reading by professional people in Michigan - potential participants.
4. Substantial encouragement for further exploration of Dr. McBride's process from professional people on a national level was obtained.

It seemed apparent that Dr. McBride's speed reading system, already attracting considerable attention and publicity, had not been researched to the degree of satisfying professional colleagues either in the field of vision or in the field of reading. If such information were to be procured, it would be necessary for Dr. McBride to allow his workshop to undergo the scrutiny of outside observers. It was felt that such a review could be made within the Institute format, although the goal of this Institute remained that of providing an attractive inservice experience rather than that of providing a vehicle for research.

In view of the difficulties involved in pursuing approaches generally unaccepted and untried with the visually impaired population, it was apparent that particular care would have to be taken in the initial stages of communication concerning this workshop. Since the professional community of persons involved in education and rehabilitation of blind persons in the Detroit area had evidenced particular interest in and concern about this topic, the state consultant

arranged for Dr. McBride to come to Michigan in the February preceding the July Institute in order to meet with certain of these persons as an informal planning committee. At this meeting, fifteen or more people were given an opportunity to question Dr. McBride about the approaches which he used in his workshop. Considerable time was given to the subject of setting up an evaluation technique which would at once be congruent with Dr. McBride's usual presentation, and which would also provide tangible data for a research team. Since the research aspect was necessarily compatible with the inservice aspect, the idea of a control group was considered unfeasible, and other approaches to evaluation were therefore to be explored. Individuals from two universities offered to help formulate the research design.

Plans were subsequently conceptualized, and the results of the efforts of the research team consisting of doctoral graduate assistants and their advisors from the field of special education, Michigan State University, were compiled; these results are therefore presented as a significant portion of this Institute report.

Dr. McBride was aware of the skepticism of these and other professionals prior to his acceptance of the co-directorship of the Institute. His meeting with the group in February did not appreciably diminish the skepticism, as was apparent by the fact that there were few participants who applied from the metropolitan area. It should be noted that other pertinent educational opportunities were being offered in the field of vision concurrent to the time of this Institute.

Details necessary for the conduct of the Institute were discussed during Dr. McBride's February visit. Mrs. Margaret Polzien, who acted as co-director and facilitator of the Institute, made plans with Dr. McBride to use the Michigan School for the Blind as a site. The availability of materials in the library at the Michigan School for the Blind, as well as at the State Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, also located in Lansing, were factors

in this selection.

Dr. McBride asked that certain other materials be provided, for example, styrofoam in various shapes and sizes, and a product to enable a person to turn pages rapidly. These were supplied. One element to which more care might have been given was the height of the working area for participants. In many cases, the readers felt that their materials needed to be lower than the usual desk or table height.

Organizational planning began soon after the February meeting. Contact was made with all teachers and teacher counselors of the blind and partially seeing in public and residential schools, as well as with professional blind persons in education and rehabilitation. On April twenty-ninth the information letters and application forms were made available throughout the state. (See pages A 3 and A 4)

Invitational and informational materials were mailed to prospective applicants on June fifteenth (see pages A 5 and A 6). At this same time a memo of progress and information was sent to all members of the planning committee and interested administrative personnel. (See page A 7)

Twenty-six applications were received. Only seventeen persons actually participated. One participant indicated high interest but was able to attend for the first week only.

Meanwhile, members of the research planning team at the University were proceeding to refine their plans for involving key persons from the fields of reading and of special education at the University. Strategies for processing information considered essential to their task of evaluation were devised. Team members perceived the opportunity to make this study to be a valuable and practical means of sharpening their own research expertise.

Combined meetings of the university research team with the Institute director and the state consultant were held in order to complete and finalize details prior to the opening of the Institute on July 2, 1973.

Arselia S. Ensign. Ph.D.

Consultant for the Visually Impaired

Michigan Department of Education

II

EVALUATION OF PROCEDURES

By Dr. Vearl G. McBride

INSTITUTE IN BRAILLE SPEED READING
MICHIGAN SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND
LANSING
JULY 2 - JULY 13

An Evaluation
by
Dr. Vearl G. McBride, Co-Director

The ten-day program began with the Research and Evaluation Team administering a test to obtain the reading rate and comprehension scores of the twelve blind students and the five sighted students who had signed up as participants. All of the participants read the test in braille whether they were sighted or blind. This in itself was a disturbing factor from the beginning. It soon became obvious that the sighted people, in this instance, were the more handicapped. However, throughout the course these five people practiced reading print rather than braille.

The course began with the usual discussion concerning the need for everyone to be able to read better, and the fact that present reading methods do not appear to be meeting our needs. It was pointed out that the average rate of reading braille is only about 90-110 words a minute, with many people feeling that this rate is incorrect, i.e., that it is too high.

The practice then began. The students were told that they were to move their hands/eyes rapidly over the pages, in any manner they wished, but they were not supposed to understand, or attempt to identify the words. Instead, they were to get in the habit of moving their hands/eyes rapidly. Later they would work for understanding, but little by little until finally full comprehension would be the goal, along with increased reading speed.

Discussions were held concerning the many different ways people have of moving their hands/eyes over the pages. It was found that no two people used exactly the same movement, although there were some movements that were similar. All had been taught to go in a left to right direction, then with a return sweep from right to left. Some had been taught to use only one finger (the index finger) of one hand, some had been taught to use the index finger of each hand. A few used two fingers of each hand, i.e., the index and middle fingers. No one used more than two fingers on each hand.

The participants were encouraged to experiment with different hand/eye movements, and to try to use more fingers in different ways.

Here I must interject a comment relative to our present methods of teaching reading to the blind and sighted. This thought was also expressed to the participants. We assume that learning to read is a very difficult process. Often it is pointed out that it must be difficult because so many people fail to master the process. Yet a child learns to talk and we simply expect him to do that and are not at all surprised when he does so. In reading, however, we assemble all of the most expensive materials and equipment we can and strive mightily, we think, to teach a child to read. Sometimes he does and sometimes he does not, and then we wonder why.

Would it not be fair to say that learning to read is no more difficult a process than learning to talk? If this is true, it would behoove us to utilize the same processes used in learning to talk. Those processes consist of exposing the child to hundreds and even thousands of words every day. Deprive him of the opportunity of hearing these words and we deprive him of speech.

This is exactly the process we should use in teaching children or adults, blind or sighted, i.e., expose them to hundreds and thousands of

braille or print words every day. This is what we attempted to do in this Institute. We wanted each participant to experiment in encountering the words in any manner that was most comfortable for him and that would bring about the best results. The teaching was based on the principle of individualized learning, or individualized reading. It was also based on the assumption that no two people move their hands or eyes in the same manner or, in other words, that no two people learn in the same manner. (A step-by-step procedure will be given later in this paper.)

The principles and procedures discussed above, sane and sound though they appear, seem to be in opposition to the generally used and accepted methods and philosophies in the educational world. The cell-by-cell, letter-by-letter, sound-by-sound approach was, therefore, the technique utilized by many of the participants. This approach we have dignified in name recently by calling it "de-coding." One problem in this case, however, was that too many of the participants, having been taught to decode, persisted in it long after its effectiveness had disappeared, if, indeed, it had ever been effective at all. This was especially true of many of the older participants. They felt this was the way they should read, that this was the only way to read. It appeared that we were not about to "teach old dogs new tricks."

This in itself could be a detriment to their improvement. Some of them were quite vocal about it and it appeared that their pessimism was rather contagious. Some of the others accepted what their elders were saying, and the lamentations were too frequent to be anything but discouraging.

We continued to stress the need to experiment with new or different techniques of moving the hands/eyes, and of increasing rate. It appeared

that the five sighted print readers in the Institute were more willing to attempt new patterns of eye movement than were some of the blind readers. The former made more than fair progress in their reading of print material.

Of special interest to us was the case of one of the braille readers who, with the aid of some magnifiers, was able to read print. He had been practicing entirely with braille books, when one evening he decided to try "speedreading" in print. To his surprise and delight he found that he was reading more than ten times his braille reading rate as shown on the pre-test. He volunteered this information to the other participants.

We have only his word for this. However, if his comments are true, it should be a matter of real interest to us, and a thing which should be researched. We know from past experience that many kinds of transfer have occurred in rapid learning that have exciting implications and possibilities.

This writer does not feel that the Institute was as successful as it might have been. He is presently conducting his fifth workshop or institute of this kind and perhaps is in an advantageous position to analyze the Michigan program. The four other programs have been termed "eminently successful." This analysis is given primarily to serve as a possible guide or a watchword should future institutes of a similar kind be considered.

The Institute was cast in an atmosphere of doubt and misgivings on the part of some. The extreme caution with which the group which met in February of 1973 gave its reluctant blessing was indicative of this. Question: Was this atmosphere in any way, directly or indirectly, passed on to the participants? This question is posed inasmuch as there was a lack of optimism from the first day of the Institute. One should not call it pessimism, but certainly there was not optimism. The writer cannot but contrast this with the atmosphere of fun and excitement and the feel of

progress prevailing in the present workshop now underway in Utah. There is no foreboding of gloom as there was in Lansing.

In the three previous workshops, as in the present one, the participants were not asked to keep a daily record or log of their activities, feelings, and analyses. A rather elaborate report was required each day of the Lansing group. Not only was it quite time-consuming, but it also encouraged the participants to enlarge upon their fears and doubts. It encouraged them to discuss their hopes and aspirations, too, but it appeared to the writer that more often than not the negative was expressed in the logs more than was the positive. The participants also discussed their logs with one another which helped to further accentuate the doubts. Those most pessimistic were consistently most vocal. It was obvious that the pessimism was "catching," and that there was comfort being taken by many of the doubters, or a case of misery loving company.

The value of paying the participants in the Institute is seriously questioned by this writer. Again, in the other four programs no remuneration was awarded the participants nor will be done in a sixth one coming up. During the past eleven years the writer has conducted more than 275 classes in rapid reading. In that time he has found a very few people who have benefited from the course when they have been allowed "to ride free." Their incentive has been removed. No one had to be concerned with getting his money's worth. Outright payment for learning should be looked upon with a jaundiced eye if we expect to get the best results.

The Research and Evaluation Team, under the direction of Mr. Harold Weiner, should be highly commended for its sincere efforts. There are some aspects of their work which should be questioned in retrospect. First, they made themselves too readily available to the participants during the day.

The team was striving for objectivity. One wonders if this promoted the goal of objectivity.

Second, the pre-test scores were not known by the participants until the beginning of the second and last week of the program. The scores were given out then only reluctantly and because the participants were demanding them. These scores were given to the instructor even more reluctantly. Indeed, he was told that he was not to see them. Question: What purpose was served in keeping them secret? Had the students known earlier what their scores were, there might have been more incentive to follow the instructions and to work to improve. The instructor was not supposed to discuss with the students their beginning scores, thereby limiting him in his efforts to prod them and otherwise encourage them.

Question? What idiotic thinking is it that wants to keep secret from the student and the teacher information about the student's standing and his progress? Such thinking should not even be dignified by the use of the term "idiotic."

Many of the participants failed to follow the instructions given concerning outside practice. At least three described in detail how they read books which they wanted "to read and understand so I had to slow down and read the way I have always read." These three, again, were among those most vocal and most doubtful and pessimistic. This kind of thing was passed on to the others in the class with loud declarations. They were advised against reading in this manner in which they were not following the directions. It is little wonder that these three boasted most loudly of their lack of skill development. The psychological effect was that if the "leaders" (those who talked the most) were having trouble, it was all right for the others to make low scores, also. Thus the feeling began to permeate the

atmosphere that rapid braille reading was possible for some, perhaps, "but I want to understand."

The same techniques utilized by the participants while "unreading" (i.e., for speed only with no comprehension) were supposed to be those used when reading for comprehension. Again, too many refused to follow these instructions despite the fact that they were repeatedly told that failure to do so would result in low scores.

The writer does feel that in many respects the Institute was successful. Most of the participants seemed to feel that they would be able to pass on to their pupils the skills in which they themselves were being instructed. After all, this was one of the two principal objectives of the Institute, the other being that of helping the participants to improve their own skills in reading braille. The results that some had in working with the children who were brought in the second week for brief instruction were, it is hoped, indicative of what the pupils of the participants can do.

Following the instructions explicitly will bring improvement. For the benefit of those who may read this evaluation booklet and wish to improve their own reading, and also for the record, a step-by-step procedure is given below. To close this out, let it be remembered that "when all else fails, follow the instructions."

Step I. Be enthusiastic and remain convinced that you CAN increase your reading rate whether you are blind, partially sighted or sighted.

Step II. Secure a timing device that will measure time in seconds. A stove timer or an egg timer will do.

Step III. Have on hand several easy (nothing above fourth or fifth grade level) reading books.

Step IV. Have someone time you to see how fast you can encounter all of the words on one page. Start with five seconds and work down, attempting to move your hands/eyes faster each time. In this effort, you are to encounter the words only, with NO attempt to understand what the words are saying. NO COMPREHENSION! Move your hands over the page in any manner you wish, i.e., across the page, straight down, straight up, spiraling, zig-zagging, etc. Try to use both hands and as many fingers as you can. Your goal now is to encounter as many words as possible in the shortest period of time without understanding their meaning.

Step V. Now have your helper time you for fifteen to twenty seconds as you move from page to page rapidly, again with no comprehension and attempting to keep from saying the words in your mind. Note: We have been taught very successfully to subvocalize the words. Now we are asking you to "kick" this habit as much as possible. This can be helped by moving your hands/eyes so fast that you cannot say the words in your mind. You are also developing the habit of moving your hands/eyes more rapidly. When you have finished with a page and are ready to turn it, you must turn it swiftly and go right on to the next page(s). Don't casually or slowly turn the pages. However, you must encounter all of the words before turning the page, but once having finished with the page, Get Rid of It.

Step VI. Continue this process for two days, experimenting often with new hand or eye movements. Try to find new ways of moving the hands or eyes. Practice at least an hour a day in ten to twenty minute periods, or whatever the time best suits your particular situation. Try to go faster each time, again without saying the words in your mind.

Step VII. Go over the same pages again and again. On the third day of practice, begin to try to understand some of the words. Try to answer a

few questions, such as "who," "where," "how many," "what color," etc. Do not try to understand more than two or three words on a page. We call this "bits and pieces" comprehension. You are not to attempt to make any sense of the story, but only to recognize a few words. You will be tempted to slow down at this point, but refuse to do so. There will be time for slowing down later. Remember, you are supposed to be encountering the words in any direction, and with as many fingers as will be best for you. This may include the use of the thumbs, also. Some people have found that in sweeping the pages, the outside edges of the thumbs can be effectively utilized in recognizing words.

Step VIII. Remember, you are going over the same material again and again. Now, as you continue this, try to add new words to those you have already recognized. Continue this until you begin to get a little sense out of the story. We call this "general comprehension," or "the thread of the story." In this process (after about two hours of "bits and pieces") you might feel that you need to slow down a little to understand better. Okay, slow down a bit, and/or change your pattern of encountering the words. Continue going over the same pages rapidly, trying to add new information to what you already have gained. You might want to decrease your rate in some places, then speed up in others. Note: Some of you will find that you recognize some things as you are reading but have lost them by the end of the timing. This is natural, but with continued practice the problem will disappear or will be lessened. Figure your rate of reading on a per minute basis now.

Step IX. Begin each practice session with "warm-up" exercises, i.e., with two or three 20-60 seconds or "speed only" with no comprehension. Then move into comprehension, trying for more comprehension each day. Move into

more difficult books now, books which have more words per page. Select the kind that you enjoy most, but do not choose the most difficult yet. Move up in the level of difficulty only as you feel you should. As you gain more understanding perhaps you can go even faster. There will be times when you should slow down a little more for better comprehension. Flexibility becomes important now. Adjust your rate to suit your needs. By now, however, you should feel uncomfortable to read at your old rate.

Step X. You may wish to change the position of your reading materials to accommodate your particular way of reading. This is an important consideration. We have found that pieces of foam rubber cut in various sizes and shapes are helpful in adjusting the materials. Remember to figure your rate of reading from time to time and also to relate to someone what you have read. Have the person then ask you questions about the selection. Read for as much as a minute or two at a time for this purpose. Gradually increase the length of the timings.

Step XI. Begin to think in terms of Main Ideas, of Sequence of Ideas and Main Characters and the Relationship of the Main Characters to the Story. Pick a selection and try to read it in a given length of time. Work for "book report" comprehension. Why did the author write as he did? Did you feel a part of the story? Did you get "involved"? Did you enjoy it? Why?

As you practice you might become discouraged, especially in the beginning. But "be not discouraged, neither be thou dismayed," for as you continue diligently to practice, success will be yours. But remember, it must be done on a daily basis, otherwise it will fail.

In conclusion, let me add that I do not believe that we teach children reading in school. I believe, rather, that we teach them S-L-O-W

reading in school. Real reading is faster reading and more in keeping with the way the brain operates. This is true whether they be blind or sighted.

III

EVALUATION OF THE INSTITUTE: "AN EXPLORATION OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF BRAILLE SPEED READING TECHNIQUES"

By

THE MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY EVALUATION TEAM

M. Diane Hodson
Thomas B. Hoeksema
Harold E. Weiner

September, 1974

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Introduction

A major problem with which braille readers have had to contend is the slowness of the tactile reading method. Hopes for speeding up this process have recently been stimulated by the writings of Dr. Vearle G. McBride and accounts of his successes with workshops for braille readers. This paper reports an evaluative study of a workshop conducted by Dr. McBride in Lansing, Michigan; July 2-13, 1973.

Background

Dr. McBride (1974) has stated, regarding a braille reading workshop he conducted in 1972, that:

> The average rate of the braille readers at the beginning of the workshop was 135 wpm . . . At the end of the two weeks, the average was 710 wpm. (p. 9)

The mean gain in this study was, thus, over 400 percent. He reports as the greatest braille reading gain that of one woman who increased her score from 144 wpm to 1,600 wpm, stating that her comprehension at the second rate was, "not quite as good."

Berger (1972) cites an article by McBride in which even greater gains are reported:

> McBride says that he taught high school students to read (print) "in French and Spanish at speeds up to 30,000 words a minute". . . In a group of 18 second grade children, "the reading scores from second grade books ranged from 2,248 words a minute with 100 percent comprehension to 34,788 words a minute with 90 percent comprehension. (p. 183)

It is difficult to imagine reading rates of these magnitudes: at these speeds, the reader would be turning pages very rapidly. Obviously, the measurement of rate must be accompanied by some estimate of comprehension. Regarding his evaluation of comprehension, McBride (1974) states:

> They were questioned orally about their reading. This method is not considered scientific despite the fact that it elicits much more satisfying information about the person's comprehension than does the usual standardized set of questions. (p. 10)

Rapid reading methods have recently been evaluated in a controlled study. Wallace (1973) conducted a study using 48 legally blind print and braille reading adults to determine the effects of rapid reading instruction alone, and rapid reading instruction combined with recognition training, on reading rate and comprehension. He concluded that rapid reading instruction, with or without recognition training, may be used to significantly increase the reading rate of legally blind adults. Data from this same study (Crandell and Wallace, 1974) support the conclusion that instruction in rapid reading ". . . does not decrease comprehension of braille materials read." (p. 17)

While Crandell and Wallace do not dwell on the magnitude of reading rate gains, but are content to report significant interactions in an ANOVA table, consideration of the magnitude of the gains in their study, and in the present one, are necessary for interpreting the meaning of the results. For example, Maxwell and Mueller (1967) describe gains to be expected merely on the basis of the focusing of attention on reading speed:

> The idea that one can improve his reading rate as measured by tests without taking a reading course has been suggested by a number of investigators . . . For example, Laycock reported that students requested to read a passage as fast as possible without "sacrificing comprehension" showed a 40 percent rate gain over their previous tested reading rate.

> In a recent study, Maxwell found that college students read significantly faster on a reading test when told to increase their reading rate. She also reported that subjects given a handout describing techniques for improving reading speed and admonished to practice daily for a week read significantly faster on posttests than did controls, and did not lose comprehension. This study raises the question of how much of the reported gains in reading programs are a function of set and suggestion, rather than a result of training and practice. . . (p. 184)

Maxwell and Mueller then liken these gains to placebo or Hawthorne effects.

Reports of the percent of gain to be expected as a result of any kind of instruction designed to increase reading rate vary widely. Tremonti (1964) reported a study utilizing a comprehensive approach to teaching speed reading where a variety of techniques and materials were used.

> ". . . in reading college textbook materials, the average increase has been 168 percent in rate and 15-20 percent in comprehension. On easier materials, the average reading rate improved 175 percent and 10-15 percent in comprehension." (p. 18)

In the above quotation, the figures indicating rate increases refer to gains of 68 percent and 75 percent, respectively.

At the lower end of the scale of expected improvement, Maxwell and Mueller (1967) reported a study in which there were rate increases of 23 percent and 32 percent for two groups of university students completing a 30-hour reading course.

These earlier studies provide a frame of reference for evaluating the magnitude of the gains found in this study. For example, if reading rate gains are, roughly, of the order of 40 percent or less, the possibility that they may be accounted for on the basis of what Maxwell and Mueller refer to as "set and suggestion" cannot be excluded. If they are in a range of up to 75 percent, as in the Tremonti report, they fall within the expectations

for any of a variety of comprehensive training approaches designed to increase reading speed. If, on the other hand, the average percentage gains are in the range of 400 percent reported by McBride, the unique efficacy of his approach would be supported.

When it was learned that Dr. McBride had accepted an invitation from the Michigan Department of Education to conduct a rapid reading workshop for braille readers, a team of evaluators from Michigan State University was invited to develop a variety of procedures to determine the effectiveness of the workshop.

Purpose of the Study

The purposes of this study were: (1) to investigate the effects of the workshop on the reading rates and comprehension of the braille-reading participants, (2) to describe the methods of instruction that were used, and (3) to secure from the participants subjective reactions to various aspects of their experience.

Description of the Institute

Institute Structure

The institute met for 10 days with a weekend break in the middle when the participants went home. They met with Dr. McBride approximately three to three and one half hours each morning for instruction and practice under his supervision. Following lunch, they were asked to practice, without McBride's supervision, what they had learned in the morning. Further

practice was required each evening. On the sixth and seventh days, some students from the Michigan School for the Blind were brought in during the morning and the participants attempted to teach them the procedures that they had learned up to that point.

Participants

Information concerning the Institute was distributed to local school districts and organizations of and for the blind in the State of Michigan. Participation in the Institute was limited to persons who met one of the following criteria:

a. blind or partially sighted teachers of the visually impaired
b. sighted teachers of the visually impaired
c. blind professionals in the field of vision
d. blind individuals

Twenty-two applications were received, all of which met one of the above criteria. Of the twenty-two respondents, sixteen completed the Institute, one left after one week to fulfill other obligations, and five chose not to participate in the Institute. A breakdown of those completing the Institute is as follows:

2 blind or partially sighted teachers of the visually impaired
5 sighted teachers of the visually impaired
4 blind professionals in the field of vision
6 blind college students (5 undergraduate, 1 graduate)

There were ten females and seven males. The group was paid for their participation in the Institute, and housing was provided for those who needed it at the Michigan School for the Blind.

Methodology

Research Design

The above purposes suggest several major questions with which the design is concerned. They are discussed in turn.

Reading Rate Gains

Do the subjects show appreciable gains in braille reading rates without a counterbalancing loss in comprehension?

For this question, a simple one-group pretest-posttest design, involving measures of reading rate and comprehension, was used. Two posttests were administered: one immediately following training, the other, one year later.

Obviously, this one group design is inadequate to the task of controlling independent variables. Restriction of research resources prevented the use of control groups. However, it was decided to measure gains even with the limitations of this design in view of the existence of studies, such as those cited above, which provide some frame of reference for evaluating the gains obtained in this study.

Description of the Method

What was the McBride method (the experimental treatment) as manifested in this Institute?

This question reflects the concern of the evaluators that the program be adequately described. An adequate description would include two major elements: (1) what McBride did as the instructor and (2) what the students did in response to instruction.

There was also an evaluational component to this description of the training program. The intent was to answer the further question: How do the methods and procedures used here relate to other work in the field of rapid reading?

To answer these questions, the following strategies were incorporated in the research design:

1. evaluation of video tapes of the instructional program by recognized experts in the field of reading from Michigan State University
2. time-sampling observations of the subjects' task responses
3. summary review of daily logs required of institute subjects

Subject Evaluations

What were the attitudes of the subjects regarding McBrides methods? What were the attitudes of subjects regarding braille?

Specific questions on the interviews and daily logs were designed to provide an overview of the subjects' perceptions of their experience.

Subjects

The subjects of this study were those 12 participants of the Institute who were blind. The five sighted participants used braille only as a teaching method and it was felt that reporting their gains in rate of reading would be tangential to the purpose of the study.

Measures and Procedures

Reading Rate Gains

The instrument used for the study was a brailled test: The Diagnostic Reading Test: Survey Section (Science Research Associates, Inc., 1947).

This test was recommended by, and secured from, the American Printing House for the Blind as an appropriate tool for use with adult braille readers.

There are two equivalent forms of the test, each about 1500 words in length. The texts of the two passages are factual stories.

Instructions to the subjects were:

> Read as rapidly as you can and still understand what you read. When you finish reading, you will be asked to answer questions on the material you have read.

To control for possible differences in the alternate forms of the test (Forms A and B), the subjects were randomly assigned to two groups. The groups were then given the tests in the following order:

	pretest	posttest	delayed posttest
Group I	A	B	A
Group II	B	A	B

It will be noted that since it was necessary to give subjects the same form of the test for both pretest and delayed posttest, there was a possibility of practice effect. It was assumed that this effect would be minimal given the one year time lapse and the type of fictional reading passage used. This assumption was confirmed by the finding that the mean comprehension scores obtained in the delayed posttest were lower than those obtained in the pretest, suggesting that the passages had, in fact, been largely forgotten.

The time required by each subject to complete the test was recorded and the words per minute (wpm) score was determined by dividing the number of words in the passage by the time taken to complete the passage. Comprehension was measured by a 20 item, multiple-choice test supplied by the publisher; the comprehension score was the percent of questions correctly answered. Smith and Dechant (1961), in an extensive review of the literature

on comprehension and rate skills, concluded that "rate of reading has no meaning apart from rate of comprehension. . . A valid appraisal of increase in reading rate must be based upon increase in amount comprehended (p. 235-236). Braam (1963) used the term, "effective rate," and suggested that it is necessary to include comprehension as a factor in equating and evaluating the rates at which materials are read. For purposes of this study, a reading rate measure that corrected for comprehension was used and labeled, "effective words per minute" (ewpm). The ewpm score was derived by multiplying wpm by the percent of comprehension for each subject (wpm x % comp. = ewpm). Thus, for example, a score of 100 wpm with a comprehension score of 80% would produce a score of 80 ewpm. This method of correcting rate scores to reflect comprehension was also used by Peterson (1972).

In considering the treatment of the data, it will be recalled that the research question relating to reading rate gains is concerned with "appreciable gains," not merely statistically significant gains. A Friedman two-way analysis of variance was employed to demonstrate the statistical significance of the gains, but without control groups this statistical information cannot assist decision-making as to the relative contributions of a "placebo" effect, of the mere decision to attempt to increase speed, or of other independent variables. It was assumed that statistically significant gains would occur; this was not a research question. The question is whether the gains are of a magnitude to suggest the value of training to increase braille-reading speed and, specifically, of such magnitude as to support McBride's claims regarding the outcomes of his workshops.

Description of the Method

To secure a picture of McBride's method, the entire instructional portion of the institute, approximately 30 hours, was videotaped. Portions of these

tapes were then reviewed by reading experts.[1] The amount of time spent by these experts in reviewing the tapes varied from one hour to approximately 10 hours and represented a sampling from the workshop, from beginning to end. Following viewing of the tapes, each expert wrote a summary of his observations and reactions. Then a meeting of four of the experts was held. They discussed their observations, as well as the written reports of the two absent members, in order to describe and assess McBride's methods. A tape was made of this meeting and a summary of the transcript was submitted to the experts for confirmation of the content.

A second type of descriptive information was obtained through formal observations. These observations were made at intervals throughout the ten-day institute by graduate students in reading. Individual subjects were observed for ten to thirty minute intervals and their actual performance on the task required was recorded. In addition, the observers noted other responses of the subjects during the observation period. A total of twenty-eight observations were made by five different observers.

Finally, a third type of descriptive information was obtained through the subjects' daily logs of their in-class and out-of-class behaviors. (See appendix for log form.) The logs contained three sections: one for the morning sessions with Dr. McBride, one for the afternoon practice sessions and one for the evening practice sessions. Under each one of the sections, the subjects were asked to describe in full detail the instructions they were given, the activities they performed in response to the instructions, and the length of time they were involved in each of those activities (additional questions dealing with the subjects' attitudes concerning the process will be described under "Subjects' Evaluations").

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[1] Dr. Gerald Duffy, Associate Professor; Dr. William Durr, Professor, Dr. Laura Roehler, Assistant Professor; Dr. George Sherman, Assistant Professor; Dr. Byron VanRoekel, Professor; and Miss Ann Leyden, Instructor.

It had been intended that the logs would be content analyzed. However, some subjects failed to complete the logs in detail or skipped some items. Because of these missing data, any coding system used for analysis would have been invalid. Therefore, findings reported from the logs consist of subjective estimates of the modal responses of the group.

Subjects' Evaluations

Interviews: All subjects were interviewed at times coinciding with the administration of the pretest, posttest, and delayed posttest. The purpose of these interviews was to determine the effects of the Institute on the participants' use of braille and on their attitude toward its use.

The interview form is presented in Appendix A, and is self-explanatory.

Logs: In addition to the questions on the logs which related to the description of McBride's method, the subjects were asked to describe their feelings about each of the activities performed and to write general comments and observations for each of the three sections of the logs: morning, afternoon, and evening.

Findings

Reading Rate Gains

The wpm, comprehension, and ewpm scores for the three test administrations are shown in Table 1. Mean scores are reported for the nine subjects who completed all three tests and for the twelve subjects who completed only the pretest and posttest. In Table 2 are presented the gain scores, and the percentage gains, for the three comparisons of the three administrations of the test.

The Friedman Two-Way Analysis of Variance was carried out for the nine subjects for whom there were complete data. The analysis is presented in Table 3. It shows significant gains in ewpm scores. It is apparent that significance is generated by the difference between the pretest scores and the posttest scores. Training produced gains which were not lost after the lapse of one year.

The information crucial to answering the research question as to the "appreciableness" of these gains is contained in the columns reporting the percentage gains in ewpm in Table 2. It will be noted that ewpm gains in the posttest range from -9% to 58%; and in the delayed posttest from -5% to 63%, with mean gains of 25% and 27% respectively.

These percentage gains are obviously not of the magnitude claimed by McBride; rather they are gains of a magnitude that previous researchers suggest could be expected on the basis of changes in motivation or through a variety of training programs.

Description of the Method

It was discovered that the methods used by McBride with the braille-reading subjects in this study were later described in an article in The New Outlook for the Blind (McBride, 1974). The major thrusts of his training can be summarized under three basic strategies.

The first element of his method related to what he referred to as "Step I." He stated:

> Be enthusiastic and remain convinced that you can increase your reading rate whether you are blind, partially sighted, or sighted. (p. 10)

The reading experts agreed that he attempted to develop this attitude in a variety of ways: by his own enthusiasm, by anecdotes relating to successes of previous students, and by asserting in a variety of ways the proposition which he stated

Table 1

Wpm, Comprehension, and Ewpm Scores

S	Pretest			Posttest			Delayed Posttest		
	wpm	% Comp	ewpm	wpm	% Comp	ewpm	wpm	% Comp	ewpm
1	158	85	134**	194	80	155	250	80	200
2	83	95	79	120	60	72	94	95	89
3	120	75	90	153	65	99	151	65	98
4	83	90	75	188	55	103	167	50	84
5	75	75	56	92	85	78	107	85	91
6	116	95	110	151	95	143	153	100	153
7	27	95	26	55	75	41	41	85	35
8	24	90	22	31	90	28	28	75	21
9	83	70	58	100	85	85	101	75	76
Mean for 9 S's	85	86	72	120	77	89	121	79	94
10*	121	100	121	157	70	110			
11	33	95	31	116	30	35			
12	34	85	29	44	95	42			
Mean for 12 S's	80	88	69	117	74	83			

*Three subjects were unable to participate in the delayed posttest.

**For convenience, ewpm scores have been rounded to the nearest whole number, and ewpm Means determined by summing the ewpm columns.

Table 2

Wpm and Ewpm Gain Scores and Percentage Gains

S	Pretest-Posttest				Pretest-Delayed Posttest				Posttest-Delayed Posttest			
	wpm		ewpm		wpm		ewpm		wpm		ewpm	
	gain	% gain	gain	% gain	gain	% gain	gain	% gain	gain	% gain	gain	% gain
1	36	23	21	16	92	58	66	49	56	29	45	29
2	37	45	-7	-9	11	13	10	13	-26	-22	17	24
3	33	28	9	10	31	26	8	9	-2	-1	-1	-1
4	105	127	28	37	84	101	9	12	-21	-11	-19	-18
5	17	23	22	39	32	43	35	63	15	16	13	17
6	35	30	33	30	37	32	43	39	2	1	10	7
7	28	104	15	58	14	52	9	35	-14	-25	-6	-15
8	7	29	6	27	4	17	-1	-5	-3	-10	-7	-25
9	17	20	27	47	18	22	18	31	1	1	-9	-11
Mean for 9 S's	35	48	17	28	36	40	22	27	1	.8	5	5
10	36	30	-11	-9								
11	83	252	4	13								
12	10	29	13	45								
Mean for 12 S's	37	62	13	25								

Table 3

Friedman Two-Way Analysis of Variance for Ewpm Scores

	Pretest		Posttest		Delayed Posttest	
S	Ewpm	Rank	Ewpm	Rank	Ewpm	Rank
1	135	1	155	2	200	3
2	79	2	72	1	89	3
3	90	1	99	3	98	2
4	75	1	103	3	84	2
5	56	1	78	2	91	3
6	110	1	143	2	153	3
7	26	1	41	3	35	2
8	22	2	28	3	21	1
9	58	1	85	3	76	2
ΣR		11		22		21
ΣR^2		121		484		441

$X_r^2 = 8.22$

significant at alpha = .016

in his article, "As you practice you might become discouraged, especially in the beginning. But, 'be not discouraged, neither be thou dismayed,' for as you continue to practice diligently success will be yours." (p. 12)

One of the reading experts summarized this aspect of his approach as follows:

> He was using this idea of self-fulling prophecy . . . He kept saying, "you will"; "I expect you will be able to do this and do that."

The second element of his approach, perhaps its central aspect, was the speeding up of the physical act of getting through, or "covering," the printed material without comprehension (he called this "unreading"). His instructions for "Step IV" were explicit as they relate to braille readers:

> Have someone time you to see how fast you can encounter all of the words on one page. Start with five second and work down, attempting to move your hands/eyes faster each time. In this effort, you are to encounter the words only, with no attempt to understand the words. Move your hands over the page in any manner you wish, i.e., across the page, straight down, straight up, spiraling, zig-zagging, etc. Try to use both hands and as many fingers as you can. Your goal now is to encounter as many words as possible in the shortest period of time without understanding their meaning. (p. 10)

Each person was encouraged to explore and develop his own methods for achieving this speed in "covering" the braille material. Again, McBride described what he would encourage:

> Some of the students used one hand, some used two. Some used one finger, some used six. Some used the edges of their fingers, some used the edges of the thumbs. Some read in one direction, a few read in two directions simultaneously. (p. 8)

Some of the comments of the reading specialists described this approach:

> The audience's activities on this first day were almost entirely a matter of mechanics . . . (to see) how fast they could turn the pages . . . Then he had them go over the pages with their hands . . . They did not recognize any words as far as I could tell. They were told not to.
>
> . . . I assumed he was going to start out with (the fact) that there are certain types of techniques, certain kinds of things you have to

> pay attention to . . . when you are reading Braille . . . What he was doing was just exactly the same as (the approach used by) Evelyn Wood . . . getting people to move their eyes over the page faster.
>
> There was sequence to this. First it was turning pages; first slowly, then faster. The second strategy was going over the page rapidly with one hand . . . They were going from left to right and then all of a sudden he said, "Why don't you go this way on the first line of Braille and go back the opposite way on the second line of Braille." There was quite a bit of reaction to that and pretty soon he said, "Why don't you do it with two hands at a time."

These comments were supported by observor time-sampling of participant behavior. The following activities were observed:

> scanning the braille line using all of the fingertips of one hand, and of both hands
>
> going back and forth on two pages at the same time, using one hand for each page
>
> starting from the middle of the page, moving the hands in opposite directions out to the end of the line
>
> starting at the bottom of the page and moving to the top
>
> scanning one page with both hands in a zigzag motion
>
> moving hands as fast as possible across the page

These and a variety of other observed behaviors suggested that McBride's directions were, in fact, conscientiously attempted by the majority of the participants.

An adequate discussion of the realities of this particular application of McBride's program must include some estimate of the diligence with which the subjects pursued their tasks. Analysis of the subjects' logs indicated that the subjects' understandings of the instructions given in the institute sessions were congruent with McBride's published description of the steps in his method and that the subjects conscientiously attempted to follow those instructions during all practice sessions. The following instructions were noted by the participants:

1st day - cover page entirely with hands; encounter all the words
- develop confidence to read fast with comprehension
- flip pages with abandon
- do not comprehend (initial instructions); unreading for speed emphasized
- read easy, small-word material
- experiment to find a comfortable technique
- refrain from mentally pronouncing the words

2nd day - try to pick up bits and pieces of words in the same amount of time; pick up one or two words on a page
- read for speed during timed periods to warm up then look for bits and pieces

3rd day - try to get thread of story; pair up and tell partner about the story
- answer specific questions; what is book about in general
- use some technique as when reading for speed only
- if comprehension levels off, pick up speed again
- set definit goals for yourself
- encounter as many words with bits and pieces and tying a thread of the story together for 30 seconds at a time

4th day - read for general comprehension along with a few details
- read for more comprehension; for a book report comprehension
- if successful, try harder books or read faster

5th & 6th day - book report comprehension
- read same material over until understand it
- read 1 minute for comprehension only, 1 minute for bits and pieces, 1 minute for little comprehension, 1 minute for 50% comprehension, and 1 minute for 70% comprehension

7th day - read for speed, then bits and pieces, then general understanding, then book report understanding
- work for longer comprehension readings - 2 minutes or more
- read the same way in and out of class

8th day - read for speed and comprehension
- read for involvement
- increase speed from 10-100 words more
- stop subvocalizing

9th day - use two books, read one until you've reached a good stopping place, then switch, reread first book
- usual procedure
- read for detail

The daily logs also describe the participants' responses to the instructions given them, i.e., the logs describe the behaviors engaged in by the participants in response to directions given by Dr. McBride:

1st day - gathered speed and was able to cover and turn pages rapidly
- gave no heed to comprehension
- practiced 2 hours in evening (80 minutes, 20 minutes, 30 minutes)
- experimented with different tactile approaches, body position, and book planes
- practiced unreading
- tried four methods, held book in various positions, and tried to increase speed of turning pages

2nd day - for speed I endeavored to cover as much material as possible
- read for bits and pieces for 20 minute intervals
- first I read for speed and then read being timed for 20 seconds trying to pick up the words
- used method of goal setting number of pages
- practiced trying for bits and pieces, covering all of pages, as fast as possible
- further efforts in speeding up the unreading process . . . an attempt to find satisfactory methods of gaining bits and pieces of information

3rd day - read for comprehension and speed, then told partner what I picked up
- tried to read 2 pages at once method
- read for the general thread of the story
- comprehension seemed to level off so I tried to pick up more speed
- practiced at comprehending with speed using short drills

4th day - used different method of encountering
- used a more difficult book
- read for book report comprehension
- slowed down to find a smooth level for comprehension reading
- practied for comprehension without learning
- slow down . . . to get general idea of plot of story and be able to tell it

5th day - used the same hand and finger movements both for speed and for comprehension
- attempted to keep my speed up and still read for understanding
- worked with more difficult material
- returned to easier material
- told my neighbor what I had read
- continued experimenting with the various methods of reading
- read Return of the Native for several hours . . . prefer the steady from left to right method--none of this "encountering" with speed or "bits and pieces"

6th day - conscious of sweep, of troublesome subvocalization
- practiced for speed then comprehension
- tried using my right hand as a reference
- practiced finding bits and pieces as quickly as possible
- practiced more slowly to find words and phrases for enjoyment and to find more information

7th day - alternating speed with comprehension level
- changed hand-reading motion
- worked with group, timing for comprehension
- worked on speed drills, bits and pieces, and general comprehension

8th day - read for comprehension, trying to stop subvocalization
- tried not to slow down on longer readings
- read one line at time, or else words begin to jumble
- worked mainly on reading for book report comprehension
- reading exclusively for comprehension at its fullest
- changed reading material to see if our speed held up
- worked on speeding up the page turning

9th day - not timing myself, since that interfers with my concentration
- doing bits and pieces
- worked on book report comprehension
- practiced for detailed comprehension
- read from 2 different
- did just a little experimenting
- tried not to vocalize in my mind
- tried reading from 2 pages simultaneously
- in the speed drills, I used my fingers to read line by line rapidly rather than cover the page by sweeps
- in comprehension drills, I pushed for speed, attempting to understand as much as possible at the speed aimed for
- spent more time with left hand reading more of the words

In summary, the daily logs supported McBride's description of his method, indicated that the participants understood the instructions, and revealed diligent efforts to follow those instructions.

The third element of McBride's approach was the gradual introduction of attempts to develop comprehension. He stated (1974):

> On the third day of practice, begin to try to understand some of the words. (McBride refers to this as "Bits and Pieces Comprehension.") Try to answer a <u>few</u> questions, such as "who," "where," "how many," "what color," etc. (McBride refers to this as "book report comprehension.") Do not try to understand more than two or three words on a page . . . You will be tempted to slow down, but resist doing so. (p. 11)

He then suggested going over the same pages repeatedly trying to get "a little sense out of the story" first and then gradually increasing the breadth of comprehension. McBride called this "getting the thread of the story." At the same time the student was admonished to attempt to maintain speed, but "adjusting your rate to suit your needs."

Again, the observations of the instructional program reaffirmed McBride's published statements. The following are representative of the comments of the reading specialists regarding comprehension:

> He tells students to try to measure comprehension, but as far as I can tell, he has no measuring instrument except that, after reading a passage they should be able to give someone else a resume of what they have read . . .
>
> He makes some vague references to comprehension, which he describes as "tying things together." He does not suggest even one way that the student can . . . measure "tying things together."

It was the consensus of the observors that the major emphasis of his instruction was on the speed of covering the material rather than on its comprehension. No additional techniques for developing comprehension were noted beyond the general kinds of instructions described above.

Subject Evaluations

Interviews

Responses to the interview are presented question by question. The first two questions are objective in nature, and the responses are tabulated. The remaing five questions are open-ended in nature; responses to them are described in narrative summaries.

In the following discussion the pretest, posttest, and delayed posttest interviews will be referred to, for the sake of brevity, as the first, second, and third interviews.

Question 1. What is your main mode of reading? Why?

Question 2. What is your preferred mode of reading? Why?

The distribution of subjects according to their responses to the five choices available in both questions are presented in Table 4. It should be noted that "listening" is categorized as a mode of reading in Table 4. This has been done to take into account the fact that blind individuals may prefer to listen to auditory presentations of reading matter.

Table 4

Distribution of Subjects According to
Their Choice of Main and Preferred Modes of Reading

Mode of Reading	Main Mode (Question 1.) Interview 1	2	3	Preferred Mode (Question 2.) Interview 1	2	3
Print	1	2	2	1	3	2
Large Print	0	0	0	0	0	0
Braille	0	0	0	2	2	0
Listening	2	4	3	3	5	5
Combination	8	6	4	5	2	2
Total	11	12	9	11	12	9

In responding to Question 1., none of the subjects selected braille as their main mode of reading. Two subjects selected braille as their preferred mode of reading on the first and second interviews; however, they failed to do so on the third interview.

Under the "combination" choice on the first interview, three of the subjects listed braille as one of their main modes of reading. On the second and third interviews two subjects who gave the combination choice listed braille as one of their main modes of reading. The two subjects, who had not listed braille in the first interview combination choice, listed a single mode (not braille) of reading on the second and third interviews.

On the first interview, four of the five subjects who listed the combination choice as their preferred mode of reading included braille. Three of these subjects chose a single preferred mode of reading on the second interview, two of

them dropping braille from their list. The other subject who listed a single mode of preferred reading on the second interview was the one who had not included braille in his original combination. Only one subject listed braille as a part of the combination choice on the third interview.

Question 3. Describe your individual technique when reading braille.

The responses to this question indicated that the subjects used techniques which are representative of the traditional methods of reading braille: i.e., using only the index finger of one or both of their hands, reading with the index finger of one hand while using the other index finger as a guide, following a left-right sequence, and going from top to bottom. There were no differences in the techniques described between the three interviews. However, on the third interview three subjects indicated that they were quicker in flipping pages, and that their back-sweep was faster.

Question 4. What do you think are some of the advantages of using braille?

The subjects indicated that the advantages of using braille were portability, independence, being able to reread with ease, done at the users leisure, and allowing the opportunity to select specific passages for reading. There were no differences in the responses between the three interviews.

Question 5. What do you think are some of the disadvantages of using braille?

The subjects indicated that the disadvantages of using braille were bulkiness of the materials, slowness and tediousness of the reading, unavailability of current readings, and the difficulty of decoding new and unfamiliar words. There were no differences in the responses between the three interviews.

Question 6. What do you think are the future benefits of using braille as a result of this workshop?

The future benefits of braille as a result of the workshop were seen as the following: increased speed, better teaching methods, ability to keep up with

professional literature, and elimination of the psychological barrier of the extensive time required for reading braille. There were no differences in the responses between the first, second, and third interviews.

Question 7. Do you feel that you would use braille for obtaining information more frequently if you could read it faster?

On the pre-interviews all subjects stated that they would use braille for obtaining information more frequently if they could read it faster. On the post-interview all but one of the subjects responded positively to this question. On the delayed post-interview, five subjects responded that they are not presently using braille more frequently than before the institute.

Logs

The following is a summary of the subjects' feelings and other comments as they were recorded throughout the workshop:

First Day

> General feeling of confusion but optimistic about final outcome. There were several responses stating a feeling of being physically tired. "I felt very tired (my biceps were becoming sore) and frustrated. How could I improve my reading level if I couldn't even muster enough concentration . . . to sit and read comfortably?"

Second Day

> Feeling of frustration and confusion generally continued though two subjects stated that they felt more confident about the final outcome. One subject stated that he felt more time should be spent on presenting the concepts behind what they were doing. "I find myself trying to guess them."

Third Day

> Subjects began to divide themselves into two groups -- one feeling encouraged about the results stating, "I did find that when I read at new speed I could comprehend," the other feeling very discouraged with comments such as, "We have spent three valuable days of our workshop in 1) encountering, 2) finding bits and pieces, and 3) slowing down for comprehension. When do we get down to the 'nitty-gritty' of really finding out the secret of getting ahead with the speed reading of braille?"

Fourth Day

There was a feeling of skepticism and disillusionment. Many comments about the method not taking into account some fundamental aspects of braille: e.g. "I feel the perceptual unit of braille is the cell and that I must move my fingers from left to right to comprehend."

Fifth Day

There was a general feeling of disenchantment with participants complaining of boredom and frustration.

Sixth Day

This group continued to complain of boredom and lack of understanding of underlying rationale. "I felt somewhat frustrated and uncertain."

Seventh Day

The group was again emphasizing the questions about underlying rationale. This seemed an outgrowth of the attempt to instruct an assigned student in speed reading of braille. "I don't think it's possible to read braille in any other way except one line at a time."

Eighth Day

There was noted a feeling of frustration at the inability to read faster and comprehend at the usual rate.

Ninth Day

In general a feeling of depression was indicated. "I felt I was getting worse. I was understanding at a slower rate. I wasn't getting much of anything."

Conclusions and Discussion

Reading Rate Gains

Do the subjects of this study show appreciable gains in braille reading rates without a counterbalancing loss in comprehension?

It was concluded that the observed gains in reading rate were of a magnitude to be expected from any of a variety of approaches to increasing reading speed, from the simple instruction to try to read faster to organized courses aimed at

increasing rate. This institute did not, in any instance, produce the 400% gains reported by McBride for a comparable workshop. It should be noted also that the large majority of participants had terminal reading rates, corrected for comprehension, of under 100 words-per-minute. Such rates are typical of those reported for braille readers generally.

Description of the Method

What was the McBride method (the experimental treatment) as manifested in this institute? The following are conclusions regarding McBride's method:

1. McBride's published portrayals of his instructional methods are accurate descriptions of those used in this workshop. There were no additional strategies not adequately described in his writings, nor were there evidences of any theoretical bases for his program other than those implicit in his writings.
2. The reading experts were unimpressed by McBride's method as observed and by his rationale for its use. The following excerpts from the experts' comments represent their body of opinion:

> You can get people to move their eyes over the page faster and that is no great trick. I can get kids to do that, but to get them to be able to hold a speed and maintain a comprehension level, I do not see that there is any evidence there at all.
>
> I would suspect that somebody who had been through the program for two weeks would ultimately improve their rate if for no other reason than the fact that they would increasingly be conscious of the necessity to read more rapidly . . . (this) does not mean that this is the way to achieve and actually increase people's rate of reading.
>
> My reaction to the whole thing would be this. Several studies were done, two at Cornell and two at the University of Iowa, where they . . . had a captive audience for an hour, and in one sixty-minute period they were able to increase reading rate substantially. Now the reason for this is that those people could read that fast to begin with, but didn't. People do not read as hard as they can go; they read at a rate that they find comfortable.

Subject Evaluations

What were the attitudes of the subjects regarding McBride's method?
What were the attitudes of the subjects regarding the medium of braille?

The method produced appreciable frustration among the majority of the subjects during the course of the workshop. The frustration appeared in the logs to be related to a lack of a theoretical rationale that the subjects could accept.

Despite the feelings of frustration expressed in the logs, the State Department Questionnaire (discussed elsewhere in this report) and the responses to the final two questions on the posttest interview indicate that the subjects generally had a positive feeling about their success in increasing their rate of reading and about their ability to use this technique with their students. This was a subjective evaluation on the part of the subjects in that they had no objective data (posttest scores) by which to evaluate their progress.

Although the subjects reported a positive feeling at the conclusion of the institute, their responses to the posttest and delayed posttest interviews indicated that 1) there were no changes in their main mode of reading, 2) there were no differences in their techniques of reading braille with the exceptions of increased speed in flipping pages and increased speed of their backsweep, 3) the subjects' perceptions of the advantages and disadvantages of braille as a result of this workshop were unchanged, and 4) although at the pretest interview all the subjects reported that if they could read braille faster they would use it more frequently, 5 of the 9 subjects reported on the delayed posttest interview that they were not using braille more frequently.

Comments on Research Procedures That May Have Influenced Results

This evaluation was considered to be entirely separate from the actual procedures used by McBride in his workshop. Every attempt was made to interfere as

little as possible with McBride's usual procedures. However, the following factors may have had an influence:

1. The insistence by McBride that the sighted readers receive their tests in braille to determine if there was any carry-over from print to braille. This caused extreme frustration on the part of the sighted readers. They were forced to read counter-point brailleas there was not sufficient time to rebraille the tests on only one side of the page.
2. The insistence by McBride and, finally by the subjects, that they receive their initial reading rate scores. Objective reading test scores had not been a part of any of the previous workshops held by McBride and was, therefore, the introduction of a new factor into his usual procedure.
3. The log-keeping by the participants which may have significantly structured their practice sessions. The requirement that they keep track of their practice time may have encouraged some particpants to put in more practice time than they might have had they not been monitored in this fashion.

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APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW -- BRAILLE WORKSHOP

Name _____ Date _____

Address _____ No. of Pupils _____

School _____ Age Range _____

School Address _____

1. What is your main mode of reading? Why?

   Regular Print
   Large Print
   Braille
   Listening
   Combination of above: specify

2. Which is your preferred mode of reading? Why?

   Regular Print
   Large Print
   Braille
   Listening
   Combination of above: specify

3. Describe your individual technique when reading braille.

4. What do you think are some of the advantages of using braille? (Ex. self-pacing)

5. What do you think are some of the disadvantages of using braille? (Ex. time consuming)

6. What do you think are the future benefits of using braille as a result of this workshop?

7. Do you feel that you would use braille for obtaining information more frequently if you could read it faster?

DAILY LOG OF ACTIVITIES

All participants in the workshop are asked to keep a daily log of all activities performed during the workshop hours and during evening practice hours.

Using a separate sheet (or sheets) of paper for each full day's activities, follow the outline given below to describe in full detail the instructions you were given, the activities you performed and your feelings about the entire process.

Be sure to write the date and your name on each page of the log.

MORNING SESSION

1. What specific instructions were you given during this session?

   A.
   B.
   C.

2. Describe in detail exactly what you did in response to the instructions.

   A.
   B.
   C.

3. How long were you involved in each of the activities listed above?

   A.
   B.
   C.

4. How did you feel about each of the activities you performed?

   A.
   B.
   C.

5. General comments or observations:

AFTERNOON SESSION

Same as morning.

EVENING HOURS

1. What were the specific instructions given to you, if any, for practicing during the evening hours?

   A.
   B.
   C.

2. What, specifically, did you do during your practice hours?

   A.
   B.
   C.

3. How long did you perform each of the above activities?

   A.
   B.
   C.

4. How did you feel about your practice session?

5. Do you wish to make any general comments about any phase of today's activities?

   COMMENTS:

IV

GENERAL ASSESSMENT OF THE INSTITUTE

The task of assessing an experience can be objective and/or subjective. One of the purposes of this Institute was to use research to evaluate the effects on the participants. This is presented in the University team report. In addition, participants were asked to express their personal feelings. In order to afford them this opportunity, a questionnaire was provided for anonymous response. (Attachment B1-8) Braille copies were provided the braille readers.

Whereas many of the personal logs kept for the research team evaluation reflected much discouragement and frustration, the results of the post-Institute questionnaire indicate more positive reactions to their experience with Dr. McBride. There appeared to be an increasing tone of optimism during the second week, probably occasioned in part by positive experiences in working with those children and adults who came into the Institute for tutoring by the participants.

Because of the difference in feeling-tone as conveyed by the logs, as noted elsewhere in this document, a complete compilation of the Institute evaluation document is included here.

Use of Institute Evaluation Form

It should be noted that the form "Evaluation Form, Explorations in Braille Speed Reading" was not a part of the formal research report presented by the Michigan State University Evaluation Team. It was instead a form designed to evaluate the Institute experience, and to provide feedback to the director, the state consultant, and others who helped in the planning.

It should further be noted that whereas the formal research data were derived only from the twelve blind participants, these data were compiled from the reactions of the sixteen persons in attendance at the last day of the Institute. The number of participants responding to the various response alternatives is indicated on the original evaluation form. (Attachment B1 and B2)

Comments Concerning Evaluation Data

This Braille Speed Reading Institute appears to have made an impact upon a group of seventeen individuals by motivating thought, communication and experimentation. Without the Institute, these individuals would not have participated in the give and take of the class discussions, or have addressed themselves to this particular challenge of self-improvement through speed reading. Comments of participants indicated that the activity and practice had educational value and profit to them.

Their evaluations reflected enthusiasm and they stated desire for more of such an experience. Though frustration accompanied the process, it apparently did serve as a stimulant, and appeared to arouse the thinking of the participants.

A new-found optimism and esprit de corps in the group was sensed at the social gathering on the final Thursday night. Two of them had written songs for the occasion, both reflecting on their experience with Dr. McBride. Participants received certificates verifying their two weeks of participation. (Pages B10 and B11)

Summary and Reflections

Interested persons who followed through every step of the Institute process noted several factors of discrepancy.

In light of certain comments made by Dr. McBride in his report, these observers believed that private discussions and one or two individuals' persistently adverse remarks did influence class morale. This negative attitude became less apparent as the sessions progressed, as was reflected through the participants' written evaluations at the close of the Institute. It is impossible to determine the extent of the effect of these negative interpersonal interactions, even as it is also impossible to evaluate the positive effects of Dr. McBride's personal and committed persuasiveness.

It is difficult to make any comparison of this reading workshop to any of the others conducted by Dr. McBride, since there are no comparable factual data on test scores of reading and comprehension available from preceding workshops. However, the factual data presented by the M.S.U. research team failed to substantiate and fell far short of the expectations of Dr. McBride suggested in his preliminary planning document for this Institute. (See page A1)

The Michigan State University team functioned carefully and earnestly from the planning stage through the delayed post-test one year later. The team is to be commended for its contribution to the Institute and the follow-up. It is regrettable, however, that although team members did contact participants for the reading and questionnaire portion of the delayed post-test, they did not include in this contact a re-evaluation of the students' subjective reactions as to the lasting effects of the Institute by re-administering the "Evaluation Form, Explorations in Braille Speed Reading." The team was not in any way committed to do so, as this particular evaluation form was not a part of the actual research design.

Haunting questions remain. Were there positive elements of the experience which participants still felt they would retain indefinitely? Did they alter their methods of teaching braille reading? Have any new approaches been stimulated or practised based upon their Institute experience? Are these results at all encouraging? How can educators move to revitalize the teaching of the reading of braille to visually impaired students?

Margaret Polzien
Co-director of the Institute

Arselia Sehler Ensign, Consultant
Michigan Department of Education

ATTACHMENT A: PRELIMINARY

DATA AND INSTRUMENTS

Preliminary Description of Workshop
by Dr. Vearl McBride

Introductory Letter
by Margaret S. Polzien

Application for Institute

Preliminary Information for Participants

WORKSHOP IN RAPID BRAILLE

The purpose of the workshop is two-fold: (1) To instruct the teachers in the skills of rapid braille for their own use, (2) to enable the teachers to pass these skills on to their pupils.

It should be noted that the average reading rate among the blind braille readers is about 90 to 110 words per minute. This is the rate at which a sighted third grader reads. The aim of the workshop will be to improve this situation. It is expected that those participating in the program will increase their rate of reading by an average increase of 300 to 800 per cent, with as good or better comprehension than that with which they now read. It must be added that this will be so if they will follow the instructions given.

It is suggested that the workshop be of 10-days duration, i.e., Monday through Friday, for two consecutive weeks. Each class period should be from 2 to 3 hours in length, with a 10- to 15-minute break during the period. (If college credit is given, this working period could be increased to 3 1/2 hours.)

The first 4 or 5 days of the workshop will be devoted to instructing the teachers. At the beginning of the 5th or 6th day, blind and/or low-vision pupils (children or young adults of varying ages) will be brought in as subjects with whom the teachers will work. They will be divided into groups, with each group being taught by one or more teachers for 1 to 1 1/2 hours daily. The teachers will then re-assemble to discuss their pupils' progress, air their problems, etc., and continue receiving instruction themselves.

Materials needed in the beginning will be many easy books on a third and fourth grade level, written in braille and inkprint. The braille and inkprint books need not be identical, however. A wide variety of materials should be available throughout the workshop period. As teachers and pupils progress, more

difficult reading materials will be required on levels equal to junior and senior high school, and adult, in that order.

There should be a variety of sizes of cuts of foam rubber for sliding and positioning the reading materials to the angles desired by each individual. Also, each teacher should have a stop watch available for his use.

A resume of the workshop, together with a booklet of instructions will be made available following the workshop period. The booklet will contain the philosophy, concepts, techniques of rapid reading in braille, and also a step-by-step description of how to teach rapid braille.

EXPLORATIONS IN BRAILLE SPEED READING

An Institute for Teachers of the Visually Handicapped

Margaret S. Polzien
Institute Director
Phone 517-291-3831

201 Holland Lake Drive
Sheridan, Michigan
April 29, 1973

Dear Colleague,

The State Department of Education has again made available to teachers of the visually handicapped an educational experience under federal funds. Dr. Arselia Sehler, Special Education Consultant, has drawn up an exciting proposal to explore new speed reading techniques for the blind and severely visually impaired. The idea is relatively new and untested, but plans call for researching the project. This phase will be conducted by doctoral students under the direction of the Department of Special Education of Michigan State University.

Dr. Vearl McBride, a reading specialist at Culver-Stockton College, Canton, Missouri, will direct the sessions. He has conducted several such workshops with much success. There will be opportunity for both training and practice during the Institute.

The course will be held July 2 - 13 at the Michigan School for the Blind in Lansing. Housing and meals will be provided for the ten working days. Cost will be twenty-five dollars ($25.00) per person on a double occupancy basis. Dormitories are closed during week-ends. This modest sum will cover the entire Institute period, and all non-local participants are urged to take advantage of these accommodations.

A stipend of fifteen dollars ($15.00) per day is designated for each participant. It is possible that this money may not be dispersed until some time after the actual Institute is held, however, due to fiscal delays beyond our control.

The course is limited to thirty participants. All participants must be either tactile or visual braille readers. Although accredited teachers of the blind (braille readers) will be given priority, other braille readers are encouraged to apply.

If you are interested or know of an interested, qualified teacher of the visually impaired, or other braille reader, please see that the enclosed form is returned to me. We would like this information by May 18, 1973.

Sincerely,

Margaret S. Polzien

APPLICATION FOR INSTITUTE

EXPLORATIONS IN BRAILLE SPEED READING

M.S.B. - July 2 - 13, 1973

NAME . . . . . .

PRESENT POSITION . . . . . .

Reading medium preferred, if other than braille: ____ large print, ____regular print

ADDRESS: Street City Zip Phone

BUSINESS: . . . . . .

HOME: . . . . . .

Please Check:

1 [ ] Teacher; Tactile braille reader (blind)

2 [ ] Teacher; Sighted braille reader

3 [ ] Not a teacher, but a tactile braille reader

4 [ ] Not a teacher, but a sighted braille reader

COMMENTS: . . . . . .

. . . . . .

. . . . . .

. . . . . .

. . . . . .

Mail to: Margaret S. Polzien
Program Director
201 Holland Lake Drive
Sheridan, Michigan 48884

Phone: Area Code 517-291-3831

EXPLORATIONS IN BRAILLE SPEED READING

An Institute for Teachers of the Visually Handicapped

Margaret S. Polzien
Institute Director
Phone 517-291-3831

201 Holland Lake Drive
Sheridan, Michigan
June 15, 1973

Dear Colleague:

We are happy to inform you that you have been selected to be a full time participant and stipend recipient in our Explorations in Braille Speed Reading Institute to be held at the Michigan School for the Blind, in Lansing.

Each participant will be responsible for bringing a braille slate and stylus and a cassette tape recorder for his own personal use.

The dormitory will be open for occupany from 3:00 P.M. to 7:00 P.M. on Sunday July 1st. Someone will be awaiting the out of Lansing participants at the entrance of the Main Building to assign you to your room. As previously announced housing and meals will be provided for the ten working days. Cost will be twenty-five dollars ($25.00) per person on a double occupany basis. Dormitories are closed during week-ends. Should you desire a particular roommate please notify me immediately otherwise rooms will be assigned.

We are enclosing a tentative schedule for the two weeks session so that you may be guided in your planning. We hope to make your stay fruitful and enjoyable as well as educationally profitable.

Because of the necessity for continuity in the course and the research evaluation being prepared by Michigan State University, class will meet on the morning of July 4th. The afternoon however will be given over to a family picnic at the Country Campus in Greenville. This provides an unusual opportunity to visit the outdoor education and recreational possibilities for any visually handicapped child or youth in the State. We will leave the Michigan School for the Blind at 12 noon and arrive at the Country Campus between 1:00 and 1:30 P.M. We would be happy to have your family bring their lunch and meet us there for an afternoon of relaxation and fun. Casual dress and sport shoes are a necessity as much of the area is wooded. The enclosed map should get you there easily. We hope you will all want to join us in this fine experience which has been made available to us.

Should you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me at the above address or by phone.

Sincerely,

Margaret S. Polzien

EXPLORATIONS IN BRAILLE SPEED READING INSTITUTE

July 2 - 13, 1973

Monday - July 2	Tuesday - July 3	Wednesday - July 4	Thursday - July 5	Friday - July 6
8:30 - 11:30 A.M. Class Session	8:30 - 11:30 A.M. Class Session	8:30 - 11:30 A.M. Class Session	8:30 - 11:30 A.M. Class Session	8:30 - 12:30 A.M. Class Session
1:00 - 2:30 P.M. Practice Session 5:30 P.M. Early Pow Wow Supper at the Wigwam	1:00 - 2:00 P.M. Practice Session 2:30 - 3:30 Visit IMC at Michigan State University	12 Noon Family Picnic at the Country Campus Greenville	1:00 - 2:30 P.M. Practice Session Open	1:00 - 2:30 P.M. Practice Session Open
Monday - July 9	**Tuesday - July 10**	**Wednesday - July 11**	**Thursday - July 12**	**Friday - July 13**
8:30 - 11:30 A.M. Class Session	8:30 - 11:30 A.M. Class Session	8:30 - 11:30 A.M. Class Session	8:30 - 11:30 A.M. Class Session	8:30 - 11:30 A.M. Class Session
1:30 - 2:30 P.M. Practice Session 3:00 P.M. State Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped	1:00 - 2:30 P.M. Practice Session 3:00 P.M. Fenner Arboretum Braille Trail	1:00 - 2:30 P.M. Practice Session Open	1:00 - 2:30 P.M. Practice Session 7:00 - 9:00 P.M. Talent Show Parting Pow-Wow Graduation at the Wigwam	1:00 - 3:00 P.M. Wrap Up Evaluation Checks

EXPLORATIONS IN BRAILLE SPEED READING

An Institute for Teachers of the Visually Handicapped

Margaret S. Polzien
Institute Director
Phone 517-291-3831

201 Holland Lake Drive
Sheridan, Michigan
July 26, 1973

Dear Colleague,

It was a pleasure having you at the Special Studies Institute-Explorations in Braille Speed Reading. We appreciated your attending the workshop and hope the gains expressed in your evaluation sheets are maintained. We realize it will take continued practice.

The doctoral students will be in touch with each of you within six months and hopefully you will show greater growth in reading rate or at least will have held on to your recent achievements.

Following the post post testing, in the spring, a manual on the institute will be published and we shall see that each of you receives a copy.

Much success in your future endeavors and enjoy the remaining summer days.

Sincerely,
Margaret S. Polzien (J.W.)

ATTACHMENT B: POST DATA

Evaluation Form: Summary

Evaluation Form: Participant Comments

Workshop Pep Songs

Achievement Certificate

Final Letter to Participants

EVALUATION FORM

EXPLORATIONS IN BRAILLE SPEED READING

I. How would you describe your feeling in general about this workshop? Mark the statement that best fits.

9 I'm still excited about it. I'm determined to keep my hard-won gains!

5 I'm more confused than anything, but I think it was a good experience.

2 I'm just sort of neutral at this point.

___ I don't really think it was worth it. I'm disappointed.

___ I'm disgusted, frustrated, and angry with myself and the people who got me into this.

II. What about the two-week timing of the Institute?

2 Too long

10 Just about right

7 Not long enough

III. Were the study sessions about the right length?

3 Too long

12 Just about right

1 Not long enough

IV. Did the televising inhibit your participation?

14 No

1 Just a little

1 To some extent

___ Very much so

___ You notice I didn't say anything.

V. Did you increase your rate of reading and still maintain adequate comprehension? Braille readers Yes 9 - No 1 Print Readers Yes 6 - No 0

VI. Do you think there are certain elements of this experience which you will retain indefinitely? If so, what might they be?

Braille Readers Yes 10 - No 0 Print Readers Yes 6 - No 0

VII. Do you think your approach to instruction of others in braille will be altered as a result of these two weeks? If so, how?

Yes 13 Not Teachers 3

VIII. Should another braille Speed Reading Institute be held here in Michigan?

15 Yes

1 Not sure

___ No

How would you improve it?

IX. Based upon this two week experience, what suggestions would you have for planning next year's Institute for teachers of the visually impaired?

X. General Comments.

VI

DO YOU THINK THERE ARE CERTAIN ELEMENTS OF THIS EXPERIENCE

WHICH YOU WILL RETAIN INDEFINITELY? IF SO, WHAT MIGHT THEY BE?

The idea that braille should be taught at a faster rate to people learning it. Speed braille should replace braille from the beginning.

My increased reading speed. I will try to find different methods or improve the techniques I have developed in the past two weeks.

The suggestions by the braille people are very valuable. Just watching them learn was good experience (in finding better methods).

Increased speed in my own reading and awareness of helping students to increase their speed. Also will encourage students to use more fingers in their reading.

Encountering words quicker.

1. The general concept of speed reading.
2. Being more willing to experiment.
3. The exchange of ideas on various techniques others used.
4. The fact that this worked in print for the student I taught.

Yes - just try to read faster - speed gained.

In print I have picked up different techniques of using my hands and eyes.

Increased openness to experimentation. Increased reading efficiency.

Speed and comprehension. Enthusiasm. Association method. Good technique. Most exciting applying to other things, writing, piano, typing, foreign languages, mental deduction.

I think that my speed has increased with good comprehension. I know I can increase my speed further with practicing.

I think that I will practice and that way keep up my speed and understanding and better both.

A more rapid hand and finger movement, a more rapid turning of pages, a more rapid backward sweep.

Yes, Speedier backsweep, quicker page-turning and movement across the line.

Yes, Keep trying new techniques. There is no one technique that is good for all people.

To teach children to use all fingers when possible - speed page turning and hand movements when reading - when to read rapidly for information.

VII

DO YOU THINK YOUR APPROACH TO INSTRUCTION OF OTHERS IN BRAILLE WILL BE ALTERED AS A RESULT OF THESE TWO WEEKS? IF SO, HOW?

Yes, by teaching them to speed read.

Yes, I will definitely plan to work with my students in the fall in learning how to develope some of these techniques.

Yes, I plan to take everything of this experience back to teach both adults and children, for better comprehension and speed.

Am more aware of how speed is involved in the reading process and will emphasize it more than in the past.

Yes, there are many different ways to encounter words and page.

Yes. I will give more material at a faster rate. I will acquaint students with and have them experiment on speed reading techniques. I will share ideas on hand movement, finger usage, etc. with them.

Yes. I will teach my friends to do this.

Yes - letting the children use all of their fingers to read with instead of just the index fingers.

Yes, to some extent. I will feel freer to let students try a broader range of ideas and techniques in reading.

No, because I don't teach braille.

Since I do not teach I can't answer the question but if I did teach I would use this method which I have learned.

Yes. I would endeavor to have them use more fingers in reading; and perceive words as a whole, not just letters in themselves.

I am not a teacher, but if I were, I would try to sensitize all the fingers and explore different techniques.

Yes, (1) Have the new learners use all their fingers from the very beginning, and try to have them recognize the symbols as soon as possible. (2) Suggest different ways to read braille and to position the book. At the same time, encourage them to experiment with any method they could think of that might not have occurred to me.

Only as to making children aware of need to respond quickly - really know they have more than just the index fingers.

VIII

SHOULD ANOTHER BRAILLE SPEED READING INSTITUTE BE HELD HERE IN MICHIGAN?

Make it longer. Have small group sessions (2 or 3 people.) Explain more of the theory.

A more structured program should be given during the first couple of days, then self-experimentation. Different types of materials should be used, magazines, catalogues, etc. A lab session with individual help would be good.

Be more organized at beginning. Not have meal tickets be as they were. Make people stay at school for one hour practice session.

1. Better organization on the part of the instructor. (The coordinator was well organized.)
2. Shorter period of time.
3. An instructor with more background, knowledge and experience with braille reading and with low visioned-readers and vision problems.

Nothing.

If print readers are to take a braille test, the braille should only be on one side.

Implement speed reading in all classes. Make afternoon sessions mandatory, it was too easy for us to exaggerate our practice times. Bring convincing braille person to demonstrate success at beginning.

I would have the instructor explain methods of moving eyes and hands and more actively watch individuals work. If it took more class time it would be worth it.

I would have tests and materials brailled; I would have definite daily goals to meet.

Although the evaluations are necessary now, I think there won't be as much pressure during the next institute because the participants would not be "pioneers."

To give meaningful suggestions would depend on the final analysis. However, careful selection of material to be used - very short stories, short articles, of high interest and low vocabulary. Exchange between participants - better than low elementary grade materials. Improve instruction techniques, such as - read longer in class (only 2 were as long as 5 min. times). Timing methods should be available to students. Remember to explain verbally - would like to know what goes on.

With definite techniques. Structure the course with definite methods.

IX

BASED UPON THIS TWO WEEK EXPERIENCE, WHAT SUGGESTIONS WOULD YOU HAVE FOR PLANNING NEXT YEAR'S INSTITUTE FOR TEACHERS OF THE VISUALLY IMPAIRED?

To work on all teaching of Visually Impaired to increase speed in all of it. All teaching of Blind is done too slow.

None.

Testing should be done in print for print people. Structured program for first couple of days, experimenting next few days, working with students last few days. P.M. sessions with individualized lab instruction.

An institute on the improvement of listening skills - various types, speed listening, new equipment, techniques for development, etc.

Nothing.

Same as number VIII. (If print readers are to take a braille test, the braille should only be on one side.)

Have built-in public relations campaign with spots in participants' local papers. Discuss implementation approach in great detail, since must be.

I would suggest that more groups work together for timing purposes in practice sessions and that the course be a little longer.

I would ask those planning to take the course to access their needs beforehand so that some of these individual needs could be met within this time.

I have no suggestions. I thought this was a worthwhile and helpful experience.

Stick to the Braille.

X

GENERAL COMMENTS

I thought it was a highly worthwhile session.

Program has a good beginning. Video taping inhibited us a bit. I realise it's the first such program in Michigan, but more public advertisements to interested persons should be available. Good experience!

Although the time wasted in class on extrenuous matters has been frustrating, the experience overall, has been rewarding. Excellent accommodations. Pleasant associations.

Not really.

1. I would like to see, as a result of these workshops, some specific evaluation of different techniques and some recommendations in regard to braille reading (hand movement, sensitization, etc.).
2. I felt that a more structured planning and use of time would have been beneficial.
3. The opportunity to work with other braille readers as students was a good idea. If possible, there should be some means of following up work begun with these people.
4. As a whole, I felt that the workshop provided some interesting and useful ideas, perhaps the most important being non-limitation of the possibilities for reading. Much more time and practice, however, will be required to develop these skills and techniques fully.

Pleasant, spontaneous, relaxed atmosphere for children. No drills, grades, pressure; just learning how to read for enjoyment. Would have to discard conventional texts and lesson plans, since geared and paced for slow readers.

My reading has improved and that was the main thing but I would like to get a lot better in the future. As a whole I enjoyed the institute.

Helpful and useful program. Hopefully, someone will find an explanation for reading two pages at once - I cannot comprehend how one can put things back into sequence. That was a little discouraging even though I believed and saw it done.

I was somewhat disappointed in that the course was poorly structured. I had assumed that it would be devoted to providing definite techniques in learning to speed up braille reading. Somehow this did not happen. I found that too many things not particularly pertinent to the blind were brought into the sessions. One could detect feelings of frustration, which I suppose is natural in something new and different being explored. However, I do feel that an individual in the course has the privilege of fully expressing what he feels relative to the good and bad points. Oftentimes questions were left unanswered. We were left in mid-air so to speak. So much time was spent in the exercise "encountering" which had little meaning for me after the first day. Of course, I realize that blind people are a little awkward at times and need to be taught to function more efficiently with their hands.

As a teacher, I would hate to put such pressure on children and stand over them and say "faster" every minute to speed them up. I believe it must be approached gradually, encouraging and praising him with the result that he is going to improve.

In my own mind, I have some reservations. I found that through my own determination of taking my book to bed at night and reading when it was quiet, I could really enjoy and gain in comprehension what I have been reading "The Return of the Native" by Thomas Hardy. I would hate to think our young people are going to speed read through life and not have favorite books which will leave a lasting and deep impression on their lives.

It has been an interesting experience. It has had some very good things to remember. I truly appreciate all the effort and experiences of visiting the State Library for the Blind, the Braille Trail, the Little Red School House, the picnics, and the graduation have been most enjoyable.

Many, many thanks for letting me participate.

Workshop Pep Song

(Sing to the tune of "I've Been Workin' On the Railroad")

By Agnes Horton

Join the Rapid Reading Workshop,
'Twill speed you on your way,
Faster, onward ever faster,
That's the order of the day.
Practice speed in turning pages,
Encounter every word on the page;
Practice speed and comprehension, it matters not your age.
Practice hard and long, keep a daily log,
Record your time and ratings faithfully;
Watch your backward sweep, increase your speed each day,
You've got to pass in just two weeks. So---
Join the Rapid Reading Workshop, improve your reading skill---
Join the Rapid Reading Workshop, Let's all say yes, I will.

Tune "In the Shade of the Old Apple Tree"

By Elizabeth Lennon

In the library of old MSB.
Curiosity got the better of me.
They told me I'd read.
At a really great speed.
But fingers and brain disagreed.
My instructor I drove up the wall.
As I tried hard to master it all,
My fingers did fly,
As the minutes whizzed by.
In the library of old MSB.

Achievement Certificate

This is to certify that

_____

has satisfactorily participated in the

SPECIAL STUDY INSTITUTE

EXPLORATIONS IN BRAILLE SPEED READING

held at the

Michigan School for the Blind

July 2 - 13, 1973

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Awarded this

_____ day of _____ 19 ___ _____

EXPLORATIONS IN BRAILLE SPEED READING

An Institute for Teachers of the Visually Handicapped

Margaret S. Polzien
Institute Director
Phone 517-291-3831

201 Holland Lake Drive
Sheridan, Michigan
June 15, 1973

Dear Colleague,

This is a report to the Planning Committee and interested administrative personnel.

Planning goes on as scheduled for the Institute on Explorations in Braille Speed Reading to be held at the Michigan School for the Blind July 2 - 13, 1973. The doctoral students under the direction of Dr. Edwin Keller are putting together a research study to evaluate the findings of the Institute. We should like to have you visit the program at anytime while we are in session.

Enclosed you will find a tentative schedule for the two weeks. You will note that a family picnic is planned for the afternoon of July 4th at the Michigan School for the Blind Country Campus in Greenville. We would be happy to have you and your family bring your lunch and join us and meet the participants and staff. The Country Campus affords an unusual opportunity for outdoor education and recreational activities available to all of Michigan's visually handicapped children and youth.

The enclosed map should assist you in finding the location. Be sure to dress in casual attire and wear sturdy footwear.

We shall be anticipating your visitation.

Sincerely,

Margaret S. Polzien